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**ZMĚNY VE SPOLEČENSKÉM POSTAVENÍ ŽEN
V BRITSKÉ SPOLEČNOSTI 19. STOLETÍ A JEJICH
REFLEXE VE VYBRANÝCH LITERÁRNÍCH DÍLECH 90.
LET 19. STOLETÍ**

**CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE
BRITISH SOCIETY DURING THE 19th CENTURY AND THEIR
REFLECTION IN SELECTED LITERARY WORKS OF THE
1890s.**

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Anotace

Bakalářská práce se zabývá změnami ve společenském postavení žen v britské společnosti 19. století a jejich reflexí ve vybraných literárních dílech. Popisuje postupné v oblasti vzdělávání žen, odraz společenského vývoje v oblasti rodinného života a nejčastější oblasti zaměstnávání žen. Znalosti historického pozadí a souvislosti jsou aplikovány k analýze literární děl Živnost paní Warrenové G.B.Shawa a „The Odd Women“ George Gissinga. Kapitoly věnované literární analýze se zaměřují na reflexi společenských změn v kontextu života literárních hrdinek. Závěr práce vyhodnocuje celkový pohled na změny v životě žen 19. století, k němuž jsou použity i závěry literární analýzy.

Klíčová slova: ženská práva, vzdělávání, mateřství, rodinný život, zaměstnávání žen, manželství, feminismus.

Annotation

The thesis engages in changes in the social status of women in the British society during the 19th century and their reflection in selected literary works. It describes gradual changes in the education of women, how the social changes were reflected in the way of family life and it also describes the most common forms of employing women. Knowledge of historical background is used for literary analysis of G.B.Shaw's Mrs. Warren Profession and George Gissing's The Odd Women. Literary analysis focuses on a reflection of social changes in the context of lives of literary heroines. The conclusion summarizes a general view of changes in women's lives using the findings of analysis.

Key words: women's rights, education, maternity, family life, employment of women, feminism.

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Introduction

The thesis deals with changes in women's social role in English society from the beginning of the nineteenth century till the end of the century and their reflection in literature. The first chapter describes historical background with its impact on people's thinking and their life. Technical progress in the nineteenth century resulted in the deepening of the differences in the social classes and changing the way of family life or even the living itself. The debates about human rights during the 19th century brought visible results.

The second chapter introduces education of women, the way women were educated at home and later at school and what knowledge and abilities were considered important for them. Education is followed by the chapter dealing with a family life and its further aspects such as maternity of single women and married ones, marriage and the way of family life together with their changes during the century.

The last theoretical chapter describing historical development deals with employment of women in the nineteenth century. It focuses mainly on women working in industry or in domestic service. It describes employment of women and how they were treated by their employers. The most important acts are included.

The aspects of these historical events are reflected in literary analysis. For literary analysis two works from English literature were chosen. The first is

drama written by George Bernard Shaw *Mrs. Warren's Profession* whose characters will be compared to George Gissing's *The Odd Women*. The thesis attempts to discover how the social changes were reflected in the lives of heroines in the chosen literary works. While women's struggle for considering their rights reached its high point, Gissing's and Shaw's heroines faced challenges from a society which was still in the grip of the domestic ideology.

Glossary of terms

Angel in the house – a theory about women who were “expected to be devoted and submissive to her husband. The Angel was passive and powerless, meek, charming, graceful, sympathetic, self-sacrificing, pious, and above all—pure“ (“The Angel in the House”, last modified March 2, 2011, http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/novel_19c/thackeray/angel.htm l.)

Domestic ideology – a theory saying that woman’s place is at home, a woman should stay within the domestic sphere and be protected from the outside world by her husband. Her only profession should be a wife and a mother. The theory was supported by John Ruskin’s work *Of Queen’s Gardens* where he proclaims that “the man's power is active, progressive, defensive. The woman's power is for rule, not for battle, — and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision. Wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her.“ (The Norton Anthology of English Literature, “John Ruskin, *Of Queen's Gardens*“, accessed November 11, 2011, http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/victorian/topic_2/ruskin.htm).

Domestic service – “domestic service work performed in a household by someone who is not a member of the family“ (The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed., 2008. *Encyclopedia.com*. accessed February 23, 2012, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-domest-ser.html>).

Household work – looking after household, cleaning, sewing etc.

Marriage of convenience – “A marriage of convenience is a marriage between two people for practical or financial reasons and not for love or intimacy“ (“Marriage of Convenience Definition,” accessed February 22, 2012, <http://marriage.about.com/od/lifestylechoices/g/convenience.htm>).

New Woman – “the term used at the end of the nineteenth century to describe women who were pushing against the limits which society imposed on women; typically values self-fulfillment and independence rather than the stereotypically feminine ideal of self-sacrifice“ (“The New Woman.” Henrik Ibsen “Hedda Gabler” *Last modified on Thursday, April 23, 2009*, accessed February 22, 2012, <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/cs6/newwoman.html>.)

Separate spheres – the ideology which “specified home as a place for women, the world of politics, work and fun belonged to men” (Abramsová 9).

The Beginnings

The beginnings of the social changes in the nineteenth century go back to the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. At that time some philosophers like marquis Condorcet or Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel criticized that women had no political rights and were not allowed to study the same way as men (Abramsová 24). The ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity appeared in thinking and they were demanded by many thinkers. New discussions and works unfortunately led to the confirmation of differences in sex supporting inequality between men and women. Most of them argued that these physical features cause the lack of stamina and inability to brain-work and predetermine them for working at home and babysitting (Ibid., 28) This theory described women as *angels in the house* (Bocková 114) that were dependent of their husbands and were expected to have the same opinions and attitudes as their husbands. This theory meant a harmful insult for a lot of women, but later it became the strongest argument for the feminist movement. The explanation is simple. They used the ideology to support a struggle for they own rights: If one wants us for creating one's perfect home, one should declare women's rights. Later, these comments helped women to get to the public when they published their works and articles supporting the fight for their rights.

The biggest changes were made during Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901). As Mark Twain said after his visit of England: "*British history is two thousand years old... the world has moved farther ahead since the Queen was born then it*

moved in all rest of the two thousand put together (The Victorian Age 927).

Thanks to Victoria's reign England became a world power and London stood for the main city of Western civilization. Due to the industrialization connected with its development, England was one of the first that captured world markets.

Technological changes were not the only factors that influenced the development of the European society in the 19th century. Publishing Wollstonecraft's and Mill's treaties started a discussion called The Woman Question. It considered mainly issues of gender inequality. The Woman Question was one of the important issues to be discussed. One of those who expressed her opinion to that topic was Queen Victoria herself. Her attitude to women rights was quite disunited. On one hand she gave support to women's education and on the other hand she was not opened for women's right to vote (The Woman Question 1650). Things women were valued for were those that were commonly connected with their sex: "*tenderness of understanding, unworldliness and innocence, domestic affection, various degrees of submissiveness*" (Ibid., 1651).

Let us focus on some figures connected with the women's right movement. One of the most important figures in women's history was Mary Wollstonecraft (1759 – 1797), the author of *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. She was one of the first women to publish her thoughts demanding education for women. According to her girls should be educated the same way as boys in order to eliminate political and social inequality. It was her answer to Rousseau's ideology claiming that women should spend their lives running households and submitting to their husband's will and needs (Bocková 102). Her attitudes

resulted in Wollstonecraft's opinion to education which distinguishes between the two sexes. Women were expected to behave according to men's will. Also the social system in which women's most important concern was to get married well, make them not to live their lives authentically (Ibid., 103). Her literary work and attitudes were influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution, which "*she observed at first hand*" (Mary Wollstonecraft 110).

In the introduction of her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* she says that "*either nature has made a great difference between man and man, or that the civilization, which has hitherto taken place in the world, has been very partial*" (Wollstonecraft, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman", 112). She also criticises that women are treated as subordinate creatures and that although physical strength is a natural law men are still sighing for "dropping" women lower and lower. She considers "*women in the grand light of human creatures, who, in common with men, are placed on this earth to unfold their faculties*" (Wollstonecraft 113) and of course their "*peculiar designation*" cannot be evolved without their education.

While talking about the education, Wollstonecraft concentrates her thought mainly on the education of the middle class people who "*appear to be in the most natural state*" (Ibid., 114), On the contrary to upper class education that "*tends to render them vain and helpless, and the unfolding mind is not strengthened by the practice of those duties which dignify the human character*" (Ibid.) Neglected education of women is according to her a cause why "*women's strength*

and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty” (Ibid., 112) and that for a man it is easier to make any woman a loving wife and a mother than a charming lady.

Wollstonecraft wanted women to struggle for knowledge and a physical ability to be able to show that they are equal human beings to men: *“I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, weakness, and those beings are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who are only the objects of pity and that kind of love, which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt”* (Ibid., 114).

Wollstonecraft’s another sphere of interest was the way women were treated. She criticised that women were viewed as something that needs to be delighted with sweet words and moreover, that many women were satisfied with that, what is used to *soften our (women’s) dependence*. According to Wollstonecraft, beauty is not a thing to be glorified. The greatest virtue is human character: *“I wish to show that elegance is inferior to virtue, that the first object of laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being, regardless of the distinction of sex; and that secondary views should be brought to this simple touchstone”* (Ibid.).

Let us focus briefly on Wollstonecraft’s life path. She started her life in London 1759 as the second child of her father, who worked as a weaver and ended his life as an alcoholic. Wollstonecraft had gone during her life through almost all positions that were typical for women in that time. She worked, e.g. as a governess, a school assistant or a writer. Her troubled life when she left

England for a man whose child she gave birth to and then was left alone and twice tried to commit suicide, ended at the age of forty-four while giving birth to her daughter later known as Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*. After Wollstonecraft's death her husband William Godwin published his memoirs giving information about her life. He described her as a "prostitute". Although Godwin tried to destroy Wollstonecraft's reputation, her work became respected. (Seymour-Smith 303-306).

Even if Wollstonecraft's reputation was tainted by the work of her husband, there were many of her followers such as Theodor Gottfried von Hippel, Wilhelm Joseph Behr or Esther Gad, who was said to be called "German Wollstonecraft" (Bocková 93-98). Probably the most influential politician interested in women rights was the British philosopher and Member of Parliament John Stuart Mill, who tried to include votes for women in the Reform Act in 1867. Unfortunately, it was too early and his effort was not successful. Together with his wife Mill wrote a book called *The Subjection of Women* (1869). The main goal of this work was to eliminate male tyranny in marriage committed on women, equalize genders and involve women into public life (Ibid., 122). His main argument was freedom. According to Mill the lack of freedom made women unable to develop their emotions and characters. Although he considered marriage an essential social relation (Ibid. 164), he criticized the general public forcing women to get married and run the household (Abramsová 264). His thoughts about better civilization brought up by educated mothers and wives (Ibid.) were later a crucial issue of the feminist movement.

As well as Mary Wollstonecraft, Mill demands that submission of women should be replaced by equality of both sexes: *“the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subordination of one sex to other – is wrong in itself, ... and it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality”* (Mill, “The Subjection of Women”, 1073). He also claims that any subjection seems natural to those who are the superiors to it: *“there was a time when the division of mankind into two classes, a small one of masters and a numerous one of slaves, appeared, even to the most cultivated minds, to be a natural, and the only natural condition of the human race”* (Ibid.) In other words, it is a natural state, which functions as a scientific ground for women’s subordination, and any change would be unnatural. Mill does not compare the subjection to slavery, but to a kind of mental dependence: *“They (men) have therefore put everything in practice to enslave their minds”* (Ibid., 1075). As Mill adds, these customs should disappear with the progress of society because they are relics of history and women should be allowed to enter the same positions at work as men. To forbid anything to women in order to save them for even silly males, Mill founds not fair. The usual excuse for these limitations is that *they* (women) *are incapable of doing it* (Ibid., 1077). The main reason seems to be men’s ill-will to live with anyone equal: Mill compares marriage to a medieval relation between *lord and vassal* (Ibid., 1080).

Mill also answers an eventual question about a woman being a queen in the Great Britain: *“To Englishmen this does not seem in the least degree unnatural, because they are used to it, but they feel it unnatural that women*

should be soldiers or members of parliament (Ibid., 1074). So as a conclusion of his “natural” theory we can say that people accept things and customs they consider natural and women usually do not complain about it, but there was an increasing number of protests against social conditions of women and their demands of being taught the same knowledge and skills as men (Ibid.)

The way women were fighting for their education, conditions at work and changing their social status would be discussed in the following sections.

Education

Modern attitudes to one powerful stream of debates about women's education can be found in the French revolution when Napoleon Bonaparte expressed the need of women to be educated. His opinions about that were far from the way women are educated these days. According to his vision women were destined to be taught how to become a good wife and a housekeeper (Abramsová 59). This attitude became a strong consideration for those who were against academic education of women.

Women and even men fighting for equal education had to face many inconveniences and criticism, but their effort should be appreciated. They opposed the traditional Victorian separation of spheres which supported fixed sexual division of labour. Although the fight for women's education took place during the nineteenth century, when one would expect intellectual discussions about the topic, the situation was different, full of unimaginable comments. Many scientists came up with the explanations why women should not be allowed to attend any university. There was a range of them – from medical to social reasons. As scientific explanations were considered works claiming that women's brain is too small to absorb academic knowledge or that this kind of studying could harm female's reproductive system appeared. These acts of course affected many women. Some of them were afraid of being described as "*unfeminine*" (Dyhouse 67). Moreover, some schools considered particular sports as strictly male and went on protecting women from contacts with men (Ibid., 68).

During the nineteenth century demands of women's education could be heard. In fact most of the authorities meant teaching in a sense stated above. It means to prepare them being a good wife and housekeeper. Subjects which were expected to be helpful in marriage were based on improving practical skills (Abramsová 270) like e. g. knitting or sewing. That was completely different from what Mary Wollstonecraft demanded in her work – educated women who would be independent of men and be able to earn their living.

Different classes were given different types of education until the beginning of the First World War. But they had one thing in common. Girls from all social classes were taught lectures of family life. Since their childhood girls had seen that their mothers behaved to them according to their gender stereotypes. Especially girls from working-class families found the right meaning of the sexual division of labour. That was the first lesson they were given. Fathers were usually working for long hours and the girls hardly saw them at home. They spent most of the day with their mothers who provided them with a model of feminine behaviour which was typical of Victorian England and its virtues (Dyhouse 3-5) that could be described as duty, family life, prudence and earnestness. Therefore, e.g. knitting was a part of the syllabus, because it provided girls with required qualities and useful skills (Abramsová 62). In the 1870s the syllabus was supplemented by house management in order to teach girls how to be economical. Working-class mothers were expected to bring up honest girls who were looking forward to marriage. That is why working-class girl's education at home focused mainly on these needs (Dyhouse

43). Girls were taught how to clean or launder or how to look after their younger brothers or sisters by their mothers. Boys' schooling was considered much more important than girls' (Ibid., 14), which explains why the mothers left the girls at home in order to help them with the household. The theory of *angles in the house* was accepted also by the clerks who were indulgent with girls' absence at school (Abramsová 63). To sum up, boys growing up in Victorian England were educated to succeed in the world, girls to cultivate homes (Dyhouse 41-44).

Daughters from working-class families had only a short-term school experience. Short-terms were lengthened in 1880s and later because of the reforms in compulsory education (Dyhouse 3). The most important reforms will be discussed later.

A different attitude could be found in families from the middle-class. Although the most important skill was running the household, girls were taught mainly singing, dancing and playing musical instruments. Upper-middle class girls (usually from wealthy families) were educated mainly at home by resident or visiting governesses. As Abramsová mentions girls were bored with that way of education (57). Sometimes, if parents considered it important, older girls were given elemental pieces of knowledge about mathematics or classics. But such interest was not very common. On the other hand, languages were considered important in upper middle class (Dyhouse 40-41). Girls from the upper middle-class were sometimes educated with their brothers and later attended boarding school for a few years or were sent to a monastery, where they were given maternity and family life lectures. The majority of schools attended by girls

from middle-class were private (Dyhouse 46). At the turn of the century also public schools tried to attract women from upper class (Ibid., 41).

Although girls and women were educated according to sexual division of labour, there were opinions that women's education is insufficient and that only well-educated woman could help to enrich civilization through her children (Abramsová 59). This was the moment when the *angel in the house* theory helped to develop educational system. By way of illustration, let us focus on the most important education acts very briefly. One of the most important was Elementary Education Act in 1870 which introduced compulsory education for children age five to thirteen but did not enforce the attendance. The compulsory school attendance was enacted in 1873 for Scotland, in 1880 for Wales and England. The beginnings of compulsory education focused mainly on brief introduction to mathematics, reading and writing, but mainly on teaching moral values (Ibid., 61). In 1880 the compulsory education was required of children between the ages five to ten, in 1893 it was compulsory to the age of eleven and in 1899 to twelve years. (Tumis, "Postavení žen a „ženská otázka“v pozdně viktoriánské a edwardiánské společnosti", 102). In 1891 Elementary Education Act made an elementary education to be provided free. Most of the educational institutions were financed by men. Women, who ran them, were dependant on men's investment (Dyhouse 64).

A particular job contributed to women's education at universities. When women received a position as a teacher they demanded the same salary as men. The problem was they were less-educated than men (Abramsová 271).

Therefore there were established institutes whose aim was to prepare women for being a good teacher. By way of illustration, King's college London (established in 1848), Bedford College (1849) should be mentioned. Actually, since 1850's primarily men received university diplomas and therefore women were expelled from higher education, because they competed with men in gaining positions at labour market. This in fact degraded knowledge and experience of, e.g. not trained midwives (Ibid., 272).

The most important point for the feminist movement was acceptance of women to medical faculties. They stated many reasons for that. As the most important were demands coming from women to be examined by female doctors. Before being allowed to study for diplomas from universities women were given possibilities of extra medical courses, whose certificates were not as prestigious as a graduation. The first university that allowed women to study medical faculty was London University in 1877. The oldest universities such as Oxford and Cambridge refused to accept women to studies till 1920 (Dyhouse 65). Sometimes women who expended huge effort to fight for women rights in education were called "bluestockings" because of former term used for women attending the first salons (Abramsová 272).

During the nineteenth century women received a chance to become intellectual partners for their husbands and well-educated mothers able to bring up a civilized nation. Moreover, the establishment of the compulsory education was important also for its social conditions of working-class. It gave them a chance for a better future and reducing their poverty.

Family life

This chapter deals with marriage and the family life of women. At first, it should be mentioned that the way of family life should be divided to before and after the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution changed the way people lived and deepened the differences among the social classes.

Let us first focus on marriage. Two aspects were connected with marriage. The first of them was conviction that it is woman's duty and honour to be married. The second aspect was economic. There were certain rules among all social classes connected with choosing a partner. Although love had its part in marriage, people put emphasis on economic background. If a woman from the lower class stayed unmarried, she had to spend her life as a servant in one's family or live in very poor economic conditions. Building and strengthening family business was important for the middle and upper class. The ability to born children in the lower class was increased by trade power in the upper class.

One of the characteristics of the 19th century marriage is that according to law, women were subordinated to their husbands and were defined as their possession. As William Blackstone wrote: *'husband and wife are one person in law, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage'* (Lewis, Jone Johnson, "Blackstone Commentaries - Women and the Law", accessed February 19 2012, http://womenshistory.about.com/cs/lives19th/a/blackstone_law.htm.)

During centuries, the most important person connected with a family life was a woman. Her main task was to be a good wife and to run the household as a hard-working mother of the family. Her main duty was to fulfill her husband's needs - even if she came from tiring work. This ideology based on separate spheres had been known at least two centuries before the Industrial Revolution when life of a man was related to work. A woman's way of life was connected mainly with giving birth to children and their raising up. The beginning of this ideology goes back to the time of Jean Jacques Rousseau. (Ibid., 47-49). Main grounds for that were mainly biological and sexual differences between both sexes. The ideology was related to the conception of an ideal type of woman who should be especially modest, patient, devoted to God, hardworking, hospitable, kind. All of these characteristics were related mainly to females, that is why their roles were according to public opinion situated mainly to household. On the other hand, all of these personality traits were important also in public.

This ideology of separate spheres and running the household had been indoctrinated young girls since their childhood. Girls of working class were taught predominantly manual work like cleaning, laundering or looking after younger siblings. This was a kind of education girls were given. They witnessed their mothers being sacrificed for the well-being of their fathers – a denial of food and clothes were a part of their private life (Abramsová 54-57). Girls from the middle and upper class were taught how to make their houses representative.

The ideal mother in the domestic ideology was the one who was reliable and open to advice of professionals from scientific branches like medicine

or hygiene. Maternity was not only a natural state, but it became something that a woman should learn. (Ibid., 102). Going back to one of the most important figures of feminist movement, Mary Wollstonecraft who proclaimed that maternity is a duty and criticised women who marry and behave only according to their husbands without their own thinking: *“they act as such children may be expected to act: - they dress, they paint,...”* (Wollstonecraft 115) and according to her they were not able to take care of children. That is one of the reasons why Wollstonecraft demanded education for women. (Abramsová 105). It was found that observing some of the rules – especially the hygiene - was problematic and unknown mainly for women from the working class who had to face their existential problems. Those women were considered unreliable. While talking about maternity, it should be mentioned that in the nineteenth century it was considered the main goal in woman’s life. Childless women were found responsible for their sterility. Usually they were recommended to find a job where they could look after one’s children.

The way of family life rapidly changed with the Industrial Revolution. Before this turning-point, home used to be connected mainly with working. Later, when the power and property of the middle class was rising, traders and educated men took the theory of the domestic ideology as an ideal they wanted to reach. When men were leaving families for their work, homes became places of consumption and relaxation when they return. Home, as a place for living, had to be separated from working. This type of living was typical mainly for the middle-class. (Ibid., 127-128). For example, in the middle-class families it was

typical that working father, coming tired from work had his own room, a “study”, which served as a place for taking a break. During his rest father was not used to being interrupted (Dyhouse 8.), which was considered normal, because women were expected to organize family lives and responsible for creating a perfect home. Homes of the upper-class were typical of their beauty, there were many decorations bought at the markets. Homes of the middle-class symbolised womanhood and were decorated with a kind of woman sense. Those who could not afford buying decorations created the stuff themselves. Family pictures or handmade decorations showed homes as a place for family life and space made and controlled by women. Even women from the working-class tried to separate their homes and work. Special rooms were prepared for guests or special occasions to show that home is a peaceful place. (Abramsová 130). There were also some handbooks written to help women with running the household, e.g. Book of Household Management written by Isabelle Beeton. (Ibid., 132.).

Home became the most important place for a woman. Her work out of her household was valued according to conviction that the right and only place for a woman is at home. Running the household became a real “job” and it differed from household work (household work and domestic service will be discussed in another chapter). Women started to be judged according to their ability to keep the household cleaned and according to their house equipment.

During the nineteenth century the form of marriage and a family life had changed. A group of women who refused to get married and wanted to live their

independent life showed up. There was also a group of young brides who were not afraid to criticise their husbands. Also marriage de convenance (marriage of convention) became a subject to criticism. Marriage became not only an economic “contract” but, mainly for the working class, it started to symbolise the most important event of a relationship. (Abramsová 71-77).

Employment

This chapter deals with employment of women during the nineteenth century that meant some changes for female workers from the working and middle class. Although these changes brought new positions for women, they were still considered mothers and those who take care of the family and run the household. Therefore they were less paid than men working in the same position.

According to Lynn Abrams we do not exactly know how many women were employed because the office clerks mainly in the second half of the 19th century did not count servants, seasonal workers or women working in family business as employed people (Abramsová 176). Certain changes are obvious at the end of the nineteenth century where the number of female factory workers rapidly increased because women were not paid as much as men even they worked in the same position. Therefore they became more favourable for their employers. As Lynn Abrams adds these women became a symbol of an independent and a free woman who was not abandoned by her family. That explains why working in a factory was usually suitable for young single women who were supposed to leave their position after the marriage.

As it results from the chapter about family life, working women in the nineteenth century can be divided into two groups. The first contains women working in the domestic service, the second group were women from factories (mainly textile). In 1890s there were 80% of employed marked in textile

industry or as household workers (Ibid., 179). The textile industry was dominant since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Women and children represented 75% of labour forces in there. (Bocková 134).

Let us first focus on women working in the household. When men had to leave their homes because of better paid positions in the factories, domestic service began to differ from household work. This work (household work) was a part of taking care of home. Although this work sometimes included farming and stock raising, women involved were considered women in the household not in agriculture. Women in England around 1830s preferred unpaid work in the household to work in agriculture. (Abramsová 131). They did so because women who worked as staff in domestic service usually had to stay in really bad conditions and felt lonely.

The household work became an important part of life mostly for middle class women because it symbolised their independence and the way they were valued and appreciated. They usually had a servant (domestic service) to help them with cleaning, cooking and running the household. Giving work to employees and keeping money made a married woman at home an important person. She became a supervisor of the servants. This job became typical female work. In Great Britain in 1870s there were around 45% of women employed in the domestic service, while talking about London there were 90% of employed women in this service (Ibid., 135). That is why several seminars and courses for hostesses became very popular.

Being a servant meant for most women their first paid work experience. The work was suitable mainly for widows or unmarried women. The majority of those unmarried women were less than thirty years old. According to Lynn Abrams many of those young women moved from the cities to the countryside to find their first job which would be better than any position in a factory. One of the advantages was sure accommodation. On the other hand, servant's life was not easy. They were not part of the family they worked for and some of the tasks, like hard physical work were quite exhausting. According to calculation from 1873, the domestic servants had to usually work twelve hours and had no day off even on Sundays. Some of them had their working time longer, fourteen to sixteen hours (The Victorian Web, The "Mute and Forgotten" Occupation, accessed November 11, 2011, <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/work/burnett3.html>.)

Long working hours together with certain subordination caused that around 1900 a lot of women changed household work for other positions like a shop assistant or a factory worker in the textile industry.

Of course, there was some kind of housekeeping among all social classes but it was represented in different ways. The ideology of *angel in the house* put working class women into a difficult position. Women belonging there had to work according to their husband's salary. In other words, the less money a husband earned, the more his wife had to get. Women were still supposed to be angels in the house, someone who creates a perfect home, and that is why their positions outside their household were not well-paid, because the idea that

women's place is at home still prevailed. Running the household in the upper class consisted of education and trusteeship, e.g. in family celebrations and giving geographical knowledge about wide spread relatives in Jewish families (Bocková 127).

Industrialization in the nineteenth century created new positions for women in certain branches. Women working in factories – factory girls - were given positions and tasks which were, according to the government or the employer, more suitable for women with respect for their physical and mental features. By way of illustration, we can mention some of them: patience, tenderness, workmanship, better sight (Abramsová 193). They had strict conditions but also certain bonuses in some factories, e.g. in Essex. For example, when a woman behaved in an immoral way, she was sacked, but when she had a child, she was given an accommodation and some kind of protection. A different situation was in Manchester, in the most industrial city in England. As Bock points out, women sometimes literally had to work till giving birth to their child. They were allowed to stay at home for only two weeks and in many cases were not able to take care of their kinds. These shocking conditions were noted down by Co-operative Women's Guild established in 1883 which stood for an organization for lower class women. At the end of the nineteenth century the ideas of paid motherhood raised. One of the pioneers was Allys Russel, who expressed this idea in 1896. It did not last a long time and women from Labour Party founded a motherhood endowment (1904) to support women with children and avoid their dependence on the husband (Bocková 218).

Despite all of these difficulties, the factories represented new homes for women. It was a place where they gathered and felt like a part of one big family. According to Lynn Abrams it is an explanation for disorganized protests and small amount of women being involved in trade unions. In Great Britain in 1890s there were only 3.2% of employed women connected with this organization.

Special group was made up by women who earned money by homemade things such as artificial flowers, sweets, shoes, knitting articles like gloves or caps, underwear or dress. In the 1840s there were 15, 000 women estimated to be involved in home dressmaking. (Victorian Web, "Slaves of the Needle:" The Seamstress in the 1840s, accessed November 20, 2011, <http://www.victorianweb.org/gender/ugoretz1.html>). These luxury products were made at home and consumed mainly by the middle or upper class women. This type of work was usually seasonal and was typical mainly of two groups of women. The first of them were those who worked in agriculture during summer and had to find another job in winter, the second were married ones or widows. Such not well-paid work made women very busy and in many cases made their life harder because the children had to run house instead of their mothers who sewed dresses, knitted gloves or did any other similar work typical of home trade. In many cases these home workers had no other choice how to survive – and what is worse – in really bad conditions. Some of them worked 15 hours a day with their own stuff like a thread, a needle or glue and had only bread and coffee to eat (Abramsová 188). In some parts of Great Britain, e.g. Shetland Island, women

were not paid for the home trade but were dependant on barter. It means that they were given fish or grain for exchange. This type of work was part of economy of expedients (Bocková 134).

Let us briefly focus on reasons why women were not well-paid for the work they did. There is no doubt they had to deal with sexual division of labour. The ideology of *angel in the house* supported employers' and males' opinions that women should only work at home.¹ In other words, they were not made for paid positions and that is why there is no need to pay them the same way as men, although they do the same job.

This brings us to another aspect of the labour. Women were less paid also for male's positions. That explains why the employers sometimes exchanged men for women to save money. The most important factory acts were these: Mines Act of 1842 – forbid women working in mines and underground, in the same year there was also Factory Act that protected women from industrial injury. In 1844, factories had to deal with Textile Factory Act that lessen working hours for women to 12 hours a day/in 1847 to 10 hours, in 1850/1878 Factory Act that forbid women working at night (Bocková 206 - 207; A Web of English History, “Factory Legislation 1802 – 1878, last modified January 6, 2011, accessed 20 November, 2011, <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/factmine/factleg.htm>).

¹ One of those who decried the employment of women was Reginald John Richardson in his work *The Rights of Women*. He suggested that they should work at home because working outside their homes makes them slaves of the employers and factory owners and brings them no wealth (Bocková 119).

These laws supported sexual division of labour and prohibit female workers in certain branches. New laws had a negative impact on women because they had to look for new positions in different branches where they were less paid for more working hours (Abramsová 196). Some of new opportunities raised at the end of the nineteenth century. Women were offered positions in insurance companies, at post offices, in accounting, in education or in nursing. These new opportunities meant new choices for women who therefore started to prefer different positions.

The most attractive seemed to be a position in administration, which was followed by working as a shop assistant and as a servant or by a factory worker. Working by the telegraph became suitable mainly for the middle class women, who had to choose their job carefully according to their social status. More than 68% of female workers by the telegraph were younger than 25 years (Ibid., 204).

The other reason why men were paid better is that they were allowed to study and qualify themselves for certain positions. As women were not qualified, they did not need to be paid the same amount as men. One of those who supported this ideology was the Scottish economist Andrew Ure, who suggested that the production should be improved by the elimination of human work or by exchanging women for men in order to save money (Bocková 135).

Just as a matter of interest, there was also an unpaid activity of women, which can be described as a birth of social workers. This let us say generosity engaged approximately 800 thousand women. Thanks to their work women could travel around Britain, learn about politics and social conditions. It is obvious that it was suitable only for women from the upper class (Ibid., 149).

The way women were perceived can be clearly seen from the example Lynn Abrams gives us: special attention was paid to women working in mines. The commissioner was not interested in conditions women worked in but in their possible immoral behaviour connected with their clothes. It resulted in a law which made female workers in mines prohibited – Mines Act 1842.

Still, there were opinions against women's employment. Reginald John Richardson in his work *The Rights of Women* suggested that they should work at home because working outside their homes makes them slaves of the employers and factory owners and brings them no wealth (Ibid.,. 119).

To sum up the employment of women in the nineteenth century, it needs to be said that it went through several changes, women were offered new positions, but still could not get out of the circle of the family life and the theory of *angel in the house*. The onus they had to carry was their dependence and belonging to a certain social class. One of those who tried to fight for women rights was Elizabeth Fry, who founded British Ladies' Society (1836). She fought for the rights of imprisoned women. She demanded separated cabinets and female staff.

G. B. Shaw: Mrs. Warren's Profession

This chapter deals with how the social changes of the 19th century are reflected in Shaw's heroines Mrs. Warren and her daughter Vivie. A New Woman is represented by Vivie, a modern and confident young woman. She wants to make decisions about her own life without any (in her point of view) useless help, *'I fancy I shall take my mother very much by surprise one of these days, if she makes arrangements that concern me without consulting me beforehand'* (Shaw, 29). She also gives other people that impression, *'You modern young ladies are splendid: perfectly splendid!'* (Shaw, 30).

Let us first focus on Mrs. Warren. She tries to look like a lady but she cannot deny her vulgar origin. *Mrs Warren is between 40 and 50, formerly pretty, showily dressed in a brilliant hat and a gay blouse fitting tightly over her bust and flanked by fashionable sleeves* (Shaw, 34), *'I was always a bit of a vulgarian'* (Shaw, 60).

Mrs. Warren did not gain any prestigious **education** such as studying at any university. She attended a church school and after started to work. Therefore she reproaches Vivie her behaviour during their fight, *'What right have you to set yourself up above me like this? You boast of what you are to me—to me, who gave you a chance of being what you are. What chance had I? Shame on you for a bad daughter and a stuck-up prude!'* (Shaw, 56).

The family life of Mrs. Warren does not correspond to the domestic ideology. She does not live a decent family life, she does not run her household,

and she thinks money can solve her relation with Vivie. She is not married and keeps in secret who Vivie's father is. She is sceptical to marriage among different social classes, *'If she's in his own station of life, let her make him marry her; but if she's far beneath him she cant expect it: why should she? it wouldn't be for her own happiness'* (Shaw, 60). I think that it has a lot to do with father issues, *'I suppose our father was a well-fed man: mother pretended he was a gentleman; but I dont know'* (Shaw, 57), and experiences of her sister who stuck in a bound of marriage with an alcoholic, *'The other (Mrs. Warren's sister) was always held up to us as a model because she married a Government laborer in the Deptford victualling yard, and kept his room and the three children neat and tidy on eighteen shillings a week—until he took to drink.'* (Shaw, 57).

Therefore the financial situation of a man and future provision of Vivie are very important for Mrs. Warren: *'Your love's a pretty cheap commodity, my lad. If you have no means of keeping a wife, that settles it; you cant have Vivie.'* (Shaw, 47). It seems that a high standard of living becomes her life philosophy: *'The only way for a woman to provide for herself decently is for her to be good to some man that can afford to be good to her.'* (Shaw, 60).

Mrs. Warren comes from the working class and thinks back to her childhood when her mother was the breadwinner: she (her mother) *'had a fried-fish shop down by the Mint, and kept herself and four daughters out of it.'* (Shaw, 57). She learnt that a factory worker could not save any money and remembered her sister that died of bad working conditions, *'One of them worked in a whitelead factory twelve hours a day for nine shillings a week until she died of lead*

poisoning. She only expected to get her hands a little paralyzed; but she died.' (Shaw, 57). Mrs. Warren experiences the conditions of the working class during her first **work experience**: *'I was a waitress; and then I went to the bar at Waterloo station: fourteen hours a day serving drinks and washing glasses for four shillings a week and my board. That was considered a great promotion for me. Well, one cold, wretched night, when I was so tired I could hardly keep myself awake.'* (Shaw, 58).

When she accepts her sister's offer for work she makes enough money to live like a member of upper-middle class. The financial situation and poor living conditions give Mrs. Warren a reason for becoming a prostitute: *'But where can a woman get the money to save in any other business? Could y o u save out of four shillings a week and keep yourself dressed as well? Not you.'* (Shaw, 58). Although she gains a better social position, she still keeps working as a prostitute and owner of hotels all over the Europe. Moreover, she employs young girls and feels like she is doing a meritorious service: *'I never was a bit ashamed really. I consider I had a right to be proud of how we managed everything so respectably, and never had a word against us, and how the girls were so well taken care of. Some of them did very well: one of them married an ambassador.'* (Shaw, 60).

As well as Gissing's Rhoda Nunn Vivie puts emphasis on **education** and gaining knowledge. Study books lying on the chair prove that she spends her free time studying, *'In front of the hammock, and within reach of her hand, is a common kitchen chair, with a pile of serious-looking books and a supply*

of writing paper on it' (Shaw, 28). She also described as *'an attractive specimen of the sensible, able, highly-educated young middle-class Englishwoman.'* (Shaw, 29). Her aptitude at practical matters counts her among modern New Women who are able to be independent and who want to be. *'I shall set up chambers in the City, and work at actuarial calculations and conveyancing. Under cover of that I shall do some law, with one eye on the Stock Exchange all the time.'*(Shaw, 32). To sum up, Vivie uses her education as a practical tool for her future life.

Vivie's experience of **the family life** is not based on the domestic ideology. As Vivie says she was brought up by strangers and there was no father who earned money. That is why she does not feel as her own mother's child or someone who should be in a position to ask her to show any feelings. She considers her mother a complete stranger, Mrs Warren: *'Do you know who youre speaking to, Miss, Vivie: No. Who are you? What are you?'* (Shaw, 54). The mutual relationship between the two women has seemingly changes after Mrs. Warren shows her real feelings during a very personal conversation with Vivie when she reveals her own past and explains the reasons which motivated her deeds. (Mrs Warren's personal reasons for the profession she has chosen would be discussed later.) Although there is a clear misunderstanding between the two women caused by their alienation, there is a moment when Vivie displays her feelings and seems that she understands her mother's behaviour: *'You have got completely the better of me tonight, though I intended it to be the other way. Let us be good friends now.'* (Shaw, 61). After Vivie finds that her

mother is still running her „hotels“although she has got enough money, she leaves to live her own life without those “wasters”. Vivie is convinced that her life would be better without any financial aid or support from her mother: *'Mrs. Warren: Vivie: whats the meaning of this? I got it from the bank this morning.*

VIVIE. It is my month's allowance. They sent it to me as usual the other day. I simply sent it back to be placed to your credit, and asked them to send you the lodgment receipt. In

future I shall support myself.

MRS WARREN [not daring to understand] Wasnt it enough? Why didnt you tell me? I'll double it: I was intending to double it. Only let me know how much you want.' (Shaw, 86).

According to the domestic ideology, women should look after their families, bring up children, and run the household. Vivie is clearly not a type of woman who is longing for a marriage with a rich man and spending her life by drinking tea in the garden. In comparison to Monica Madden, Vivie does not want to marry a man for money, Crofts: *' I want to settle down with a Lady Crofts. I suppose you think me very blunt, eh?'* Vivie: *'Not at all: I am very much obliged to you for being so definite and business-like. I quite appreciate the offer: the money, the position, L a d y C r o f t s, and so on. But I think I will say no, if you dont mind, I'd rather not.'* (Shaw, 69). Although he provides money for her, Crofts to Mrs.Warren: *'I'd die before her and leave her a bouncing widow*

with plenty of money. I'll settle the whole properte on her.' (Shaw, 51-52).

When Crofts is talking about money for a widow he is describing the situation that a lot of men had to face due to the domestic ideology. The men have to earn enough money to support one's children and wives who run the household. Not all of them had that amount of money when they were young, of course. That is the case of Mr. Crofts and Edmund Widdowson in Gissing's *The Odd Women*.

Considering Vivie's relation to men, it is obvious that men do not necessarily have to see a woman as the *angel in the house*. Relations among men and women have changed: *'Praed: When I was your age, young men and women were afraid of each other: there was no good fellowship. Nothing real. Only gallantry copied out of novels, and as vulgar and affected as it could be. Maidenly reserve! gentlemanly chivalry! always saying no when you meant yes! Simple purgatory for shy and sincere souls.'* (Shaw, 30). Moreover, not only women can take marriage as an escape from a dismal financial situation: *'...it's the money aspect. I really cant bring myself to touch the old woman's money now.*

Praed: And was that what you were going to marry on?

Frank: What else? I havnt any money, nor the smallest turn for making it.' (Shaw, 83).

Vivie's opinion of marriage and attitude to Mrs. Warren's attempts to become closer with her are clear: *'I dont want a mother; and I dont want a husband.'*(Shaw, 90) or *'I must*

be treated as a woman of business, permanently single and permanently unromantic.' (Shaw, 81).

Vivie wants to build a successful career and she proves that when she devotes her life to **work**, *'I must be treated as a woman of business, permanently single'* (Shaw, 81). *'I must have work, and must make more money than I spend.'* (Shaw, 89). She represents New Women when she states that everyone can have a better and an honest life due to one's work and deeds: *'People are always blaming circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them.'* (Shaw, 57). As Pread comments: *'I know Miss Warren is a great devotee of the Gospel of Getting On.'* (Shaw, 57).

Shaw reveals social taboos in his drama. He shows a life of a woman who started a profitable job and is being judged by those who had never been in her shoes. As well as Gissing Shaw shows that money makes women independent. But the fact that women had to sell their own body to have enough money serves Shaw to criticise the society. Mrs. Warren says she started her career as a prostitute because she wanted to save money. Although she has enough money, she will not stop running her business because of not saving money, but due to having much money for living life like the upper class: *MRS WARREN. 'Vivie: do you know how rich I am?'*

VIVIE. 'I have no doubt you are very rich.'

MRS WARREN. 'But you dont know all that that means; youre too young. It means a new dress every day; it means theatres and balls every night; it means having the pick of all the gentlemen in Europe at your feet; it means a lovely house and plenty of servants; it means the choicest of eating and drinking; it means everything you like, everything you want, everything you can think of. And what are you here? A mere drudge, toiling and moiling early and late for your bare living and two cheap dresses a year.' (Shaw, 87)'. These reasons are not acceptable for Vivie, the New Woman, who does not accept longing for luxury as a reason for continuing one's career as a prostitute: *'If I had been you, mother, I might have done as you did; but I should not have lived one life and believed in another.'*(Shaw, 91). Mrs. Warren in Shaw's play admits that prostitution in a comfortable private hotel can give women an independent life. Although she pretends her independence, she is dependent on her decision being a prostitute.

George Gissing: The Odd Women

This chapter deals with the analysis of chosen heroines of the novel who were living in Victorian era. The “label” odd usually means that something or somebody is different. As a dictionary (<http://dictionary.reference.com/>) says it means *differing in nature from what is ordinary, usual or remaining after all others are paired*. It usually has a negative meaning. In the case of women in the nineteenth century it also meant being single, not married and dependent on poor salaries, *So many odd women—no making a pair with them* (Showalter in the introduction to *The Odd Women*). While thinking about Rhoda Nunn or Monica Madden, two main heroines of the novel, the odd does not necessarily have to have a negative meaning. Rhoda and Monica are different because they tried to differ from the expectations the Victorian society had. In Monica’s case it is the result of her situation. As mentioned in previous chapters, women were according to domestic ideology expected to stay at home and create a perfect home for their husband and children and the only work they should have was running the household. But what if one’s life situation does not allow anybody to live a life like that? That was the case of the odd women Gissing illustrated in his novel.

Two main characters are Rhoda Nunn and Monica Madden. Let me first describe Monica Madden is one of the **daughters** of Dr. Madden, who is a protagonist of the domestic ideology. Dr. Madden does not want his daughters to earn their own money because he is convinced that it is a man’s duty to provide

them with enough financial resources, *'Let men grapple with the world; for, as the old hymn says, "'tis their nature to."* I should grieve indeed if I thought my girls would ever have to distress themselves about money matters.' (Gissing, 1). Maybe that is why his daughters were only taught skills connected with a household. However, Dr. Madden dies unexpectedly and does not leave his daughters (he was a widower) a sufficient amount of money. Monica, Alicia and Virginia have to find a job.

When we consider the **education** of Madden girls, they are taught according to the domestic ideology. It says that women should work inside and share skills valuable for a family life. That makes Madden girls not equipped for any well paid job at the market.

Alicia and Virginia **work** as governesses. Monica, the youngest of them, works as a shop assistant. All of them earn ridiculous money compared to men. By way of illustration: Alice earns 16 pounds a year, Virginia earns 12 pounds a year, *'Alice obtained a situation as nursery-governess at sixteen pounds a year. Virginia was fortunate enough to be accepted as companion by a gentlewoman at Weston-super-Mare; her payment, twelve pounds.'* (Gissing, 11). Compared to any male character in the novel it is more than 5 or even 10 times lower than annual male's income, *'I shall have a hundred and fifty a year, and be able to take private pupils. On two hundred, at least, I can count, and there are possibilities I won't venture to speak of, because it doesn't do to be too hopeful. Two hundred a year is a great advance for me'* (Gissing, 101). This terribly low income reflected in their physical and mental condition. Meal with low-nutritious income

together with poverty cause several problems to Victoria and Alicia. Alicia suffers from headaches and fevers, Victoria becomes addicted to alcohol. Monica is also not in a good condition, *'Where is Monica employed?' 'At a draper's in Walworth Road. She is worked to death. Every week I see a difference in her, poor child.* (Gissing, 24).

Monica does not want to spend her life in those terrible conditions. She is determined to find a husband who would save her from being odd in the way of Victorian society thinking. The one she chooses is Edmund Widdowson, a 20 years older man with annual income about 600 pounds which he inherited from his late brother. Although for Monica it was not love at first sight, she does not want to miss a chance of becoming financially secure. She is aware of the fact that meeting another man like Edmund could be impossible. *It seemed that he had really fallen in love with her; he might prove a devoted husband. She felt no love in return; but between the prospect of a marriage of esteem and that of no marriage at all there was little room for hesitation. The chances were that she might never again receive an offer from a man whose social standing she could respect.* (Gissing, 76). Disenchantment from her decision comes in the marriage.

Monica appears to subscribe to **the domestic ideology** in the way that she expects a man to be a breadwinner. On the other hand she has features of the New woman or feminists. She used to walk alone in the street and that was not appropriate for women because they would be mistaken for prostitutes. Edmund does not like to see it but he respected that as a feature of an extraordinary

woman. Edmund expects that Monica would get rid off these manners after the wedding. Unfortunately for him, Monica turns out to be more feministic that he could imagine. Monica wants to be supported; she is young, wants to gather with people and does not want to spend time only with her husband. She suffers under his jealousy. *'We ought to have more enjoyment,' she pursued courageously. 'Think of the numbers of people who live a dull, monotonous life just because they can't help it. How they would envy us, with so much money to spend, free to do just what we like! Doesn't it seem a pity to sit there day after day alone'* [Edmund] *'Don't, my darling!'* he implored. *'Don't! That makes me think you don't really love me.'* (Gissing, 184). Monica shows feelings to Edmund and tries to save their relation, but her attitude to marriage is modern, influenced by feminist movement in the nineteenth century, *'But married woman are not idle, protested Monica earnestly.'* (Gissing, 41).

The fact that any woman marries a man that is twenty years older serves as a criticism of society. As Edmund admits he inherited money from his brother, *'A year and a half ago my only brother died. He had been very successful in life, and he left me what I regard as a fortune'* (Gissing, 46). *'I'm very idle. But that's partly because I have worked very hard and hopelessly all my life—till a year and a half ago. I began to earn my own living when I was fourteen, and now I am forty four— today.'* Thirty years at work and the inheritance made him being worthy for marriage. In other words, young men that have no money were not desired in Victorian era.

If we look at the facts it is no wonder that Edmund is afraid of losing his wife. He is older and does not seek fellowships. On the other hand he admits these personal features before the marriage, ' *It's because I have lived so much alone. I have never had more than one or two friends, and I am absurdly jealous when you want to get away from me and amuse yourself with strangers. I can't talk to such people. I am not suited for society. If I hadn't met you in that strange way, by miracle, I should never have been able to marry.* ' (Gissing, 190).

He knows that too much freedom would cause their jealousy and result in alienation. Even his attempts to convince Monica to move to the countryside fail, because she considers them only as a tool how to overmaster and possess her. Also his talks about women's place at home do not persuade her to change her mind. ' *Woman's sphere is the home, Monica. Unfortunately girls are often obliged to go out and earn their living, but this is unnatural, a necessity which advanced civilization will altogether abolish. You shall read John Ruskin; every word he says about women is good and precious. If a woman can neither have a home of her own, nor find occupation in any one else's she is deeply to be pitied; her life is bound to be unhappy. I sincerely believe that an educated woman had better become a domestic servant than try to imitate the life of a man.* ' (Gissing, 173) or ' *In my Opinion, Monica, a woman ought never to be so happy as when she is looking after her home.* ' (Gissing, 184). Monica's need for freedom and active social life count her among the New Women. Edmund's inability to provide her with idyllic Victorian style of family life shows that a patriarchal model of marriage does not work because it limits both, men and women.

At first, according to the Victorian domestic ideology, it was a man's duty to support his wife. Not every man was able to fulfill this model because of his financial situation at twenties. Therefore, many of them married when they had enough money. That was the case of Widdowson who marries at his forties after he inherits money. One at the age of forty does not want to adjust one's habits to anyone who is twenty years younger. Secondly, according to Ruskin and Victorian model of marriage a man is the strong one, the one who's *active and defensive* (Ruskin, Of Queen's Gardens). On the other hand women had their duties as well. Women had to serve their men and made their home perfect and in addition, be dependant on her husband. No polemic fights were accepted. Therefore, it is clear that a bond of marriage where a man is twenty or more years older and a woman has to stand his "bachelor's" habits and where the man cannot show his weakness cannot work. That is the case of Monica and Edmund. Monica who is influenced by her father that a husband has to support his wife and family does not tolerate Edmund's displays of jealousy and inability to solve any situation as a strong and man. The unhappy marriage of Monica and Edmund serves Gissing as a tool to criticize a patriarchal model of marriage.

The last chance to save their relationship could have been a trip to France. Edmund, maybe because of his low self confidence, gives up and leaves. While he is thinking about misery in his marriage, Monica falls in love with Bevis. She uses the language of the New-women she is legitimizing her behaviour. She proclaims that it is not bad to be in love with Bevis, but being with someone who she does

not love would be immoral. Edmund's despair graduates when he hires a detective to spy on Monica.

Two unhappy people are trapped in a marriage influenced by patriarchal attitudes and personal disillusion. Monica's personal tragedy ends when she does not want to get back to Edmund even she is expecting his baby. Even her pregnancy does not lower her pride. Edmund's lover letters to her without any response support Monica's decision not to reunite with him; *But Monica could not be moved. She refused to go again under her husband's roof until he had stated that his charge against her was absolutely unfounded* (Gissing, 344) She gives birth to a girl and dies. Presumptive life of the new born girl symbolises the changes in the nineteenth century that contributed to a new life of modern and independent women in the 20th and 21st century who are not dependant to live in a patriarchal marriage, but brave enough to live on their own, *'Make a brave woman of her,' said Rhoda kindly.* (Gissing, 386).

The other main heroine is Rhoda Nunn. She is a representative of a New-woman, an independent feminist. She lives and works with Mary Barfoot and her aim of life is to educate self confident and independent women who do not have to rely on any male breadwinner. *'I would have no girl, however wealthy her parent, grow up without a profession. There should be no such thing as a class of females vulgarized by the necessity of finding daily amusement.'* (Gissing, 111).

Her name is a nomen omen. She has some features of nuns living in a monastery. She dresses into plain clothes and has a negative attitude to sex.

She emphasizes the importance of virginity, *'Women's battle is not only against themselves. The necessity of the case demands what you call a strained ideal. I am seriously convinced that before the female sex can be raised from its low level there will have to be a widespread revolt against sexual instinct. Christianity couldn't spread over the world without help of the ascetic ideal, and this great movement for woman's emancipation must also have its ascetics.'* (Gissing, 67). She knows that being an authority at her **school** she must behave according to what she is teaching.

Her **work** as an assistant at an institution for young women and her thoughts about women's superiority make her a feminist. She puts emphasis on education because she is convinced that it also helps to form one's character, *I am not chiefly anxious that you should earn money, but that women in general shall become rational and responsible human beings. One of the supreme social needs of our day is the education of women in self respect and self restraint.* (Gissing, 152). She wants to be successful in her job and as her friend Mary says they try to educate emancipated women who would be doing well in their job. As Mary says: *I myself have had an education in clerkship, and have most capacity for such employment, I look about for girls of like mind, and do my best to prepare them for work in offices. And (here I must become emphatic once more) I am glad to have entered on this course. I am glad that I can show girls the way to a career which my opponents call unwomanly.* (Gissing, 152). This attitude is feministic and reflects changes in women's thinking. Just to be more specific, one of those critics mentioned above is Edmund Widdowson, *They*

want to make women unwomanly, to make them unfit for the only duties women ought to perform (Gissing, 185).

Maybe because she is in love with a man who admires her attitudes she forgets about her negative sayings about love and **marriage**, *'I would have girls taught that marriage is a thing to be avoided rather than hoped for. I would teach them that for the majority of women marriage means disgrace. ...Because the majority of men are without sense of honour. To be bound to them in wedlock is shame and misery.'* (Gissing, 111). Rhoda also gets interested in marriage when she falls in love with Everard Barfoot who likes her intellectual independence. *In the world's eye this marriage of hers was far better than any she could reasonably have hoped, and her heart approved it with rapture. At a stage in life when she had sternly reconciled herself never to know a man's love, this love had sought her with passionate persistency of which even a beautiful young girl might feel proud.* (Gissing, 308).

As well as Monica's relationship, Rhoda's fails. The attraction is gone when both find that their relationship is only a competition in quelling each other. Barfoot's interpretation of marriage as a relation of equal humans appears empty when he wants to control Rhoda in order to adore him. Therefore, she thinks that a marriage would be a mistake and refuses to marry him. She is teaching women to be brave and independent, that is why she cannot end up in a marriage because she feels she has to serve as an example to other women. Mrs. Warren also does not believe in married life. In comparison to Monica Madden who took marriage

as a chance to live a better life and not to die in a terrible conditions caused also by physical exhaustion.

As she says being single or *odd* does not mean for a woman being *useless*, *So many odd women—no making a pair with them. The pessimists call them useless, lost, futile lives. I, naturally—being one of them myself—take another view. I look upon them as a great reserve. When one woman vanishes in matrimony, the reserve offers a substitute for the world's work. True, they are not all trained yet—far from it. I want to help in that— to train the reserve.* (Gissing, 41).

Gissing pointed out that social conditions have a serious impact on our lives. He wanted to show the fact that women could gain no self-confidence when they did not earn enough money to support themselves. The conditions of working women set the problem of the society really nicely. He does not blame institution of marriage but he finds fault with the Victorian ideas which were quite unfair to women.

Conclusion

It has been the aim of this thesis to describe the social changes in the nineteenth century which had a certain impact on women's education, employment and their private lives. These changes described in the first four chapters are used to understand and analyse two literary works of G.B.Shaw and George Gissing. The first chapter showed the background of the women's struggle for their rights. Works of Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill were described to see how they contributed to discussion of those rights. Education of women was one of the things Wollstonecraft demanded.

Education itself was discussed in the second chapter. It illustrated how the girls' and women's way of education was changing during the 19th century. Girls learning how to run the house and looking after the family gradually changed into typists, teachers or even doctors. What conditions or circumstances women had to deal in their private lives was told the third chapter. As a result of the changes coming from the Industrial Revolution, household work was for women from the lower class increased by working in factories or in domestic service or by other types of paid work in order to earn enough money for the family. In that time the houses of the upper class started to be more decorated and woman's position in there was strengthen by the increasing importance of the breadwinner.

The way women earned money and the acts which were passed in the 19th century in order to regulate working conditions were described in the fourth

chapter. Lowering working hours and pointing out women's lower salaries and terrible working conditions mainly in factories helped to the improvement of their living and working conditions.

All findings from the first four chapters were used to analyse heroines in Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and in Gissing's *The Odd Women*. The fifth and the sixth chapters deal with the analysis. Contrasting life decisions of Mrs. Warren and her daughter prove how different the two women of the nineteenth century became after one of them was given a chance to be well educated and to find a good position. Gissing's Rhoda Nunn is aware of that fact and tries to do as much as she can for education of women.

How the life looks like without a father who brings enough money is illustrated in both works. Madden sisters' life changes rapidly when their father dies and they have to earn money and live in terrible conditions. Vivie Warren has no father. Mrs. Warren does not want Vivie to live in the same terrible conditions as she herself used to. That is why she sells her own body.

The sixth chapter contrasts life decisions of Monica Madden and Rhoda Nunn which especially Monica led into unhappiness. Being terribly paid and living in bad conditions led Monica to end in an unhappy marriage with an older man. Gissing gives an example of marriage turning into a hidden prostitution. Rhoda faced the situation that although women were offered better positions and were allowed to attend universities, the British society was still not prepared to admit women all of their rights, mainly those coming from their private decisions.

If I had to compare the employment of Warren's women and Madden's women, I would say that the position of young Mrs. Warren and daughters of Dr. Madden completely changed. At the beginning Madden daughters grew up in a family with a high social status. Mrs. Warren did not have that good starting position in her life. Mrs. Warren also had to work a lot as well as Monica. Both of them had a chance to change it but each of them in a different way. Monica takes the change as her main aim but Mrs. Warren was given it by her sister Liz.

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